

Values-Gap Driven Body Discomfort – Insatiable Season 13, Episode 6

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:05] AS: You went vegetarian, then paleo. You stopped restricting. You're trying to love yourself more, but nothing seems to be working fully, and you might feel hopeless about ever feeling good in your body. And every time you fail, you trust yourself less.

As the larger world feels increasingly in peril, caring about how you feel in your body may feel frivolous and even more hopeless. We are at a time when our individual and collective stories about what to do for our bodies, health and the world are crumbling. Because these stories we have, they aren't working for how our bodies or our world actually works. And I believe centering our bodies, all bodies, not just thin, white or "good" bodies and what all of our bodies need to thrive will help orient us in a better direction.

There's no one-size-fits-all diet, exercise or way to bio hack. Good health is much less about willpower or discipline and more a complex inter-web of our societal structures, food choices, emotional history, environmental exposures and privilege. There is a great loss of certainty in safety when we initially have to face what is real versus the half-truths we've been fed. But the loss of these stories creates an opening. If this opening is pursued with curiosity and discernment, we can discover our awe-inspiring ability to create and embody a new body story for our physical and political bodies and the earth.

I'm Ali Shapiro, and I host the Insatiable podcast, so we engage in the type of conversations that will lead us to radically new body stories for ourselves, each other, and the earth. To do that, we discuss a more truthful approach to freedom from cravings, emotional eating, binging and



being all or nothing. We explore the hidden aspects of fighting our food, our weight, and our bodies and dive deep into nutrition and behavioral change science and true whole health.

But fair warning, this is not your parents' health care or the conspiratorial crazy of the wellness world. This is a big rebel gathering to those who want to hold nuance, context and complexity in order to lead the way to a healthier future for all, because our lust for life is truly insatiable.

Hello, everybody. Welcome to season 13 episode 6, values-gap-driven body discomfort. And we're going to have two of my clients, Charlotta Hibbs and Margaret Louise Vicente, who we call Mags, on the podcast to help really show some clear examples of what we mean by this values-gap-driven body discomfort.

This is part of our Food is Safety season. To orient you, if this is your first episode you're listening to or just as a reminder, in our first four episodes, we have traversed the first four foundations of my process cultures with food. Which is we establish the origins of why food equals safety. That the root of stress eating are stories that make us feel unsafe, specifically that we might be exposed as separate in some bad way. And thus, our status and how much control we have over our lives are going to be compromised.

And these stories, which are a mix of facts are what actually happened. And then what we think happens to us means about us. In other words, what we're told to think about that in relation to why it's our fault or what it means about us is heavily influenced by puritanism and Protestantism, division of Christianity for lack of a better word. And this is even if, like me, you don't consider yourself religious.

And then in episode four we talked about the various protection strategies we use in our stories that, again, if we don't know their stories, we call ourselves stress. We have protection strategies in our stress. And we've often used those so long that they think are our personalities, like foodie, emotional eater or perfectionist.

And then in episode five we talked about supporting our nervous system and how our body, not just our brain, informs our mindsets, like diet starts tomorrow, or chuck it after eating, or we binge to co-regulate our nervous system. Truce with food honors that to change your eating and exercise mindset, it's not enough to just focus on your thoughts or to try to use willpower. In other words, we're not just using your brain. We're going to also get your body, which is a projection – I'm sorry. Your mind is a projection of your body and brain together. We do that with food and we do that with stories, safety.

In today's episode, we're going to focus on how to choose differently in our stories today. In other words, how do we work through our stress for more fulfillment, which feels like more emotional safety? Which not only dissolves stress and stress eating, but it just makes life so much more fun.

In my programs, we call this option C. It's the choice that isn't all or nothing or black and white. When our stories were forming, especially when our sense of safety was being compromised, we usually only had a safe or a bad choice. For example, when I had cancer at 13, the safe choice was to listen to the doctors, and the bad choice was to not and most likely die. Or I used to think to lose weight, the safe choice was to diet or I'd be out of control.

For both my health and weight and how they are intertwined, I now know there are sustainable fulfilling options in between versus thinking doctors have all the answers, or you need to feel hungry and deprived to lose weight, or deprived to be healthy. Option C is how do I want to respond to my stress today? What is available to me that wasn't available in the past? What is satisfying not sacrificing my health and soul?

This is what builds psychological safety. It's trusting we have our own backs and we'll support ourselves to advocate for the truth in the goals we want to pursue. And over time, with the right approach, this leads to really feeling at home or comfortable in our bodies. Because body discomfort can move us from ideas about what we value to better embodying those values.

And this values-gap matters deeply right now especially as old structures crumble and we have a profound chance to build something new.

When I surveyed my newsletter readers back in April, a common survey response theme was, "I feel uncomfortable in my body, and I feel ridiculous that I am focused on this when there's so much else that is so much more important to deal with." And look, I so get this. I felt this way about my own weight struggles when 9/11 happened, the US invasion of Iraq era. And I was volunteering to get the boat out in 2004.

Today's world issues feel much more urgent and complex. Yet, what I've discovered in this time since then, past I guess almost 20 years, is that tending to our body discomfort is not ridiculous. With a holistic and root cause resolution approach like truce with food, it will reveal where we are out of alignment with our values. And that the values we rail against out there are often inside us that we are embodying.

I share with my newsletter list how my own recent body discomfort in the last couple of years, I'm out of it now, was a piling on of attention to my own values-gap. I was exhausted. I had plantar fasciitis, insomnia, low immunity, perimenopause symptoms and 30 pounds of post-pregnancy weight. 30 extra pounds.

For me, I wasn't battling food. Rather, I was battling overworking. I kept pushing despite being burned out. And I could no longer overwork as a new mother, especially one who was going through menopause. Now this may seem #captainobvious. However, our stories, again, based on episode two, they are an emotional elephant we're all riding on.

To not overwork felt like a huge risk to me. I didn't know why. But I used my own truce framework to address the gap between knowing what I should do, yet why wasn't I doing it? In this case, why couldn't I slow down and work less? Because I'm seasoned enough in my relationship with my body to know it has more knowing than I can yet verbalize. And I



especially need to pay attention to being uncomfortable in my body because that means I'm in an important crossroads.

The long and short of it is, I had to confront that while I rail against capitalism and its destruction of our health and the earth, I embodied capitalism's hustle culture, always be productive in busy values. So much that I thought they were me, my type A personality. In reality, I was perpetuating the capitalistic values I claimed to oppose. Because these values brought me success, a meaningful career that I love, financial security, freedom and recognition. I had to examine, though, are these values really me? Or are they what other people told me were important.

We're all hopefully in a time of a great reshuffling of our values. We all need to get clear on what most deeply matters to us, because what we've been told to value is not serving us or our humanity's future. Values clarity and honesty requires our body feeling clear and comfortable. It's difficult to hear the truth when we are in pain, stress eating and are burned out.

For me, I had to get clear on what is enough with my finances and mothering, because capitalism orients us towards unfettered growth. This means you can never work, accomplish or be enough. I was able to self-author my own enough success values for this phase of my life and experiment with valuing slowing down.

Now as someone who grew up middle-class and has been hustling since I was 12 when I started a babysitting business, this is a massive shift. I work way less now. I enjoy my life so much more as I don't always feel behind. And slowing down, I savor what I do have. I've uncoupled career and life success the last few years. I have the energy and capacity to parent Essa, my son, the way I want to and really enjoy him versus having work hanging over my head all the time. Of course, this still happens, right? This is not about perfection.

And I've had to ask myself, "Test out." Because that's what we do, which is what the next episode of Insatiable will be about, experimenting with new stories. Will I make less money? Maybe? Will I have less opportunities? Maybe? Less recognition? Maybe?

And what I've discovered in this process is I really measure things differently now. Do I have enough money? Yes. And I can say now that it's the end of the year, I can say I actually made more money this year and work less. Now, this is not the coach that's going to tell you, "See? That was a self-limited belief that you have to work harder to make more money." Sometimes you do. Sometimes you don't.

I was at the stage of my business growth, right? I'm 15 years into this. Where when I took a hard look at what was actually moving the needle and having an impact, a lot of my work of people who actually come to my programs, it's word of mouth, right? Which is beautiful. Because I've been doing this for 15 years.

My clients tell other people. That and this podcast, right? Which I love doing. Getting discerning about what is actually essential in my business versus really understanding what I need to do for impact versus being busy has been a game changer.

Am I fulfilled? Yes. And I feel more holistically successful in my life both in my work and my non-work success. Do I trust myself enough to figure out if the winds of enoughness changed? Yes, I do trust myself to figure it out because I know I can change. Because I got the tools and I've done it before. These metrics matter more to me now than just more, more, more.

Because, ultimately, the feeling of enoughness is what I think we're actually after with more success and more and more, more, more. And the side effect of my new enough success definition was being able to have the time, energy and focus to tend to my body. I resolved all the issues I was having, including a 20-pound weight loss during the most stressful period of my

life. Yes, the last three years. I should say two-and-a-half have been the most stressful of my life I think.

The values of rest and slowness have emerged. I learned how rest is its own form of divesting from patriarchy and white supremacy, thanks to Jordan Maney. I highly recommend checking out her work. I feel comfortable and alive in my body. It means I have more energy and capacity to contribute to my local community and neighbors, which is the most potent place for social change.

This is one small example of how your body battle and collective change are either/or. It's both. They are interconnected and so many more rabbit holes than just this example can illustrate. And I think my conversation today with Charlotta and Mags is going to really show you how some of these values that we have are the same values that are keeping up these really sick systems. And yeah, they're crumbling here and there, but they're also still exerting their power.

I share all of this, because if you're uncomfortable in your body, working through your own values-gap is part of your work to do, for you and a more healthy world for all of us. To provide more examples of values-gap-driven body discomfort, I'm bringing on two Truce with Food clients who just wrapped up to help give you a real taste of the grit and glory involved in self-authoring our values.

With Charlotta and Mags, they're going to talk about their values revolution. That includes but isn't limited to breaking up with perfectionism, productivity, the patriarchy and unhealthy independence to try and do everything yourself.

I hope you feel inspired by the paths they've chosen, which is out of the matrix of normal. Because the Western world's over-culture's main values are patriarchy and control, as we will talk about much more with Charlotta and Mags today, especially around this idea of discipline. And these values don't work with how the body works where a meaningful life happens.

Now, I know rebels, outsiders and misfits are mostly who listen to this. And we especially crave freedom and purpose. But I want to show you how we are also at the mercy of embodying lots of norms and values we might think we are. To do this, I'm relaying what Tara McMullen, host of the What Works podcast, taught me on episode 398 of her podcast, Good Bodies. Highly recommend Tara's work as well.

On that podcast, she discusses a 21st century philosopher, Gi Deleuze, who says all the messages we receive on the regular, about freedom, pleasure and purpose, are merely a facade for a society of control. Tara shares that Deleuze explains how society was originally organized around sovereignty. And it's funny, because I see this word going around the wellness world a lot, sovereignty.

But in cultures, when society was organized around sovereignty, there was a ruler. And then those who had to live by those rules are risk-severe punishment. Think of the eras of kings and priests. You avoid breaking the rules in those societies because you fear the guillotine, right?

This made me think of Galileo who was forced to recant his scientific discoveries because it threatened the power of the Catholic church. Or in their words, it was contrary to the Holy Scripture. Or as the Indigo Girls saying, "Galileo's head was on the block. The crime was looking up the truth." Okay, that's the most you ever could hear me sing. I know I don't have a good voice. But I freaking love the Indigo Girls.

Tara explains how societies of sovereignty give way to societies of discipline, which she says Michel Foucault describes as organized around institutions. Homes, hospitals schools, factories, prisons and barracks in the Army. Each institution had expectations around a moral code standard. If you want to have an idea why we even think in terms of good and bad, this is part of why.

If you transgress by going outside the norms or breaking the rules, each institution would punish you through rehabilitation. If you were a toddler, you're sent to time out in this mode of discipline. You're sent to the principal's office and maybe detention. Or at work, you're put on a performance improvement plan.

She says you would stay in line to avoid the unpleasantness or shame. Then she shares Deleuze added a third type of society, societies of control. In societies of control the boundaries between institutions breakdown. There's no difference between school, work, home or church. Institutional codes of conduct become meaningless because these institutions are now boundless.

Instead of institutions, we now have what's represented as the ultimate freedom, a society that is tolerant, acceptive and inclusive. And of course, we know that's fucking not true, because we had internalized the standards of conduct. In other words, these institutions are boundless because we embody the values that they taught us. And my clients who are in Truce with Food, or in the truth coaching certification, you know that's the socialized mind, right? Or in my clients' language are ideas of good and bad are based on these moral codes.

As a result, we police ourselves and others, Tara talks about. She says we become constantly under surveillance through anxious self-monitoring or worried about what our co-workers or others think. We don't need punishment. We punish ourselves.

If you think we have like the DNA of our genetics, think of the DNA of genetics of these institutions of control are now just passed on to us. They're a little offspring. And we think we're free, but we're still controlled by what they value. Pretty fascinating to think about, right? And I can't thank Tara enough for this understanding of where we are culturally in terms of values and being free to be who we are and others who they are.

Now, the most cynical view of this is that we haven't really evolved that much in terms of freedom from the days of kings and priests. We just think we have. A more hopeful view is that part of the backlash right now against women's bodily autonomy in the form of Roe versus Wade being overturned, or hate crimes against LGBTQIA, Jewish people and others is because more marginalized people are actually making progress with their own freedom. Progress in the United States has always been met with backlash and regression. But that's a debate for another podcast.

What I want you to take away from this is that many of us have a values-gap that is driving our body discomfort. Because we define discipline as control and health only about your ability to control your weight and aging body and beauty. And our worth is based on our ability to override our body's needs and control our productivity and look like it's all easy to do it. No wonder our collective weight is at an all-time high and collective Health, mental health included, suffering so much.

And based on what I shared above, no freaking wonder, right? Growing up in America, I'm told to about value freedom. I value freedom. But I never was like, "What does that mean?" Right? And took a hard look at it. I've been gaslighting myself for a lot of my life.

To inspire you to bring some genuine wonder to your own values and how this radically shifts your relationship to food and life, we're now going to chat with Charlotta and Mags.

One brief thing about mental health, our conversation did take a little bit of a detour into mental health. And we do talk a little bit about suicide. If that is triggering for you, it's in the second half towards the end. So, you may want to skip the second half. Or you just may want to skip this episode.

But I know this is a longer one. I think it's worth the length, especially when you hear how they have shifted their values. It's one thing to say, "Okay, I want to value slowness." Or Mags talks

about a deeper value around beauty. Okay, it's one thing to say that. But how do you actually do it? And we get into that today.

So, enjoy. And I'll see you on the flip side.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:20:50] AS: Welcome, Charlotta and Margaret, who we call Mags. Welcome to the pod. How are you guys feeling?

[00:20:57] MLV: Good.

[00:20:58] CH: Good and nervous.

[00:20:59] MLV: Good and nervous Yeah, same.

[00:21:02] AS: Yeah, before we got on, everybody, we had a big discussion about this. Like our friend, Sas, says, bravery feels like ass, right?

[00:21:12] MLV: Feels very assy right now. Yes.

[00:21:18] AS: Well, thank you guys both for doing it. It means a lot. I know so many people are going to learn from your experience and really bring this concept of our values. Especially a lot of people are going to be listening to this at the end of the year, the New Year. And I think a lot of us want to – when we change we think, "Well, what do I value? What are my values?" And I hope today people see that values, kind of even the way we assess them, need to undergo a resolution/revolution.

When I say to you guys food equals safety, how do you understand that pre-truce with food? And how do you understand it now? Charlotta, we'll start with you. And then we'll go to Mags.

[00:21:59] CH: Safety, since I've been doing quite a bit of the food journey. It's been a lot kind of been the emotional eating. And it's protection. It's an escape and all that, which is we kind of got to that at least. It's not just about stop eating. But that was more of a concept from the outside still for me. It was still more mental. Even though we say emotional eating and comfort eating, it was still very mental to me.

And now, then it's way deeper. It's down to instinct. It's down to like a felt sense. It's down on nervous system level. You have taught us a lot, but also from your podcast and other sources, that it's actually a felt sense. That it's one of the first senses we feel when we come out and get fed. And without food, we would not survive. And that causes reactions in our body that – or instincts that we can't control. That has really been the embodiment of the safety has been my biggest learning of it and getting it way more into my own body.

[00:22:59] AS: I love that. And Charlotta, you and I had kind of a side conversation about the difference between instinct and intuition. And will you share that? Because I think that's really helpful for people to think about in terms of safety and how safety is cultivated by cultivating our intuition. But intuition is something that is – when we hear intuitive eating, people I think are actually – what they're trying to get to is instinctual eating.

[00:23:26] CH: Yes. Yeah. I 100% agree. Because when we hear this, the Roman's child. That the child just comes out and it's a natural thing that just knows everything and having tuition. I don't think we have intuitions as children. My opinion I think is more of instincts, we do. And then we all learn intuition. Because intuition, I think it's more learned than we have understood before. That it's things we picking up and then we're putting it together. And it happens so quickly that later we almost think that intuition, it just happens. But our bodies reacting so quickly to so many things that intuition takes practice and training. And at times, I don't think

that the child picks from intuition. A lot of it is instinct as well. Intuitive eating to me, I get it. But I also think that it takes a lot of practice. Intuition is not intuitive. Yeah, I think we learn to be intuitive.

[00:24:22] AS: Yeah. Intuitive is based on patterns and learning.

[00:24:26] CH: Exactly. Yeah.

[00:24:28] AS: I love that you make that distinction of feeling safe in our instincts and really embodying that versus thinking we're wrong, right?

[00:24:36] CH: Yeah. We can't control instincts that we can be with them or not be afraid when they happen.

[00:24:42] AS: And can you say a little bit before we – and then I want to get to Mags. About the instincts that you actually realize are important to honor versus thinking that your instincts are, "I just want food. Or I just –" Whatever the instinct – whatever the thing you you believed about yourself that made you feel unsafe about your instincts. Can you just talk a little bit about that difference?

[00:25:05] CH: I think a lot of the instincts have been the urge to be hungry. For example, like the instinct of the body telling me you're hungry. That has been something that's like in mind. It should be more controlled. I should be in control when I'm hungry. What the body is supposed to – the body's instinct is something that I ought to be able to control. So when it has arisen to me sensations and instincts I've been fearing that and thinking that it's something that – Yeah, that it's almost like it's an outside thing. I didn't control it well enough and here it pops at me. And I'm not sure if that makes sense or if that's really what you wanted to go.

[00:25:45] AS: No. It's a perfect example of hunger, right?

[00:25:48] CH: Yeah. Mm-hmm. Yeah. And still, hunger to me is like that's something that I think you can't control into certain things. You think we can. We learn ourselves to do that. I don't think I'm born with a way of where I can control my hunger. Or the hunger sensations I should say. But I think we can learn to turn our system off or – Or not system off. That we can numb out and not feel when we're hungry or when we're satisfied.

[00:26:15] AS: Yeah. Well, and only for a little bit, right? And then we – I'm out of control. And it's like, "Well, because you were too much in control before." So, it's going to balance itself out.

Thank you. Mags, how about you?

[00:26:29] MLV: Yeah. Well, actually, just to add to what you're saying, Charlotta, even when it comes to instincts, even not specifically about food and when you're hungry or not. I was thinking of this yesterday, instincts, it's even when you just – and when we're talking about the health industry, or medically, or even diet culture. When you know like something in your instinct is telling you like something's not making sense here. So, it's even more than – I feel like it can even be when it comes for that angle, too, it's like instinct is like a lot of people – they sense something's wrong with all these experts and all the same advice that we keep hearing. But, yeah, I just feel like that's a good point about the instincts. And it's bigger than just thinking of it in terms of, "Oh, my food today. What am I eating? Am I hungry?" It's like this whole – Yeah, there's just so much more to it when it comes to instincts, and diet culture and what a lot of people are feeling even medically where they feel. Maybe I'm rambling on. But, yeah, just feeling like it's a good word to pick when it comes to safety. Because when you shut off that part of you, like the instinct part, I feel like the self-trust goes down. But really, it's because we're getting all these influences. It's affecting and clouding our judgment of things. And then you give that power away. Anyway, I just thought it was a good word to start with, for sure.

[00:27:51] AS: And I love your example in the medical industry, or even wellness industry, right? That's so true, Mags. Is like so many times here, like if it doesn't feel right with what your doctor tells you. But we're also trained to be good. And that the doctor knows. And so, it's so easy to override that instinct.

[00:28:10] MLV: Exactly. And that was a big word that was coming up as I was thinking of all this. It was a good word to start with. And, yeah. And for me, in terms of food equal safety. Well, I would say, prior to Truce with Food, it was a very superficial understanding that I had of it where it just kind of – there's a lot of buzzwords in diet culture. To me I was like, "Yeah, yeah. I get it. I use food as a crutch."

But when you actually peel back the layers and work through everything that led to you using food as a crutch and as a safety, my understanding is so much deeper. And it's not like a limiting like, "Yes. Okay. I know." And I just feel like I had more judgment towards like little statements like that. Whereas now, it's been replaced with more like self-compassion.

It's just like it broadened my whole understanding of really everything that's involved when it comes to us turning to food. And food is not the enemy. I don't see it as the enemy anymore.

[00:29:08] AS: I love that. And even talking about that broader understanding is – because we're going to be talking about values today. It's like, "Well, I value truth or freedom. But like what does that actually mean?" Right? There can be so many different definitions.

And I think part of increasing our sense of safety is being – psychological safety specifically, is being able to be with more of that complexity, right? And more of that nuance. And that there isn't one way. I love that you brought that up. I just think that's really important. Because I think a lot of times, we all think we get things. And it's like –

[00:29:42] MLV: Yeah. Even the language. Even just having the language. It's like just – yeah, there's just so much complexity and depth to all of this. And then we just make it about something like, "Oh, our weight." Or, "Oh, something superficial."

To me, it's like, "Wow! There's so many layers." And working through them is not easy. But it's just – yeah, I understand that why I turn to safety. And when we're going through our history and all the things that accumulated and that led to where we are. It just like it makes so much sense. And it's like, "How could I not turn to food?" You know? It's just more self-compassion when it comes to statements like that for me.

[00:30:19] AS: Wonderful. I love it. I have a gym buddy that we go to the – We go to the same classes together. And she got off the pill and is doing family planning. And now she's like really into getting rid of endocrine disruptors in her cleaning supplies. And her boyfriend, he's in finance. And he works in New York part-time. And he comes home and she's like, "I got – Ali recommended this new cleaner that's like not endocrine disruptor." And he's like, "The only way to be healthy is to do keto and not eat sugar." And I was like – And I was like, "He doesn't know." I was like, "Yeah, the only way to get rich is to cut coupons." Versus he works for like Goldman Sachs and spends his life researching about it. It's like, "Okay, you have more depth of understanding and finance." But it just backs me up how people think like they know like in areas when they just don't.

[00:31:08] MLV: Very simplified formula for everything. It's like, "Oh, just do this." Yeah. And that's – Yeah, exactly.

[00:31:17] AS: I'd love for both of you to share why you did join Truce with Food so people have a little context. And then we'll go into what story you were working on as a result.

[00:31:25] MLV: For me, it was like my last ditch effort to resolve a history of emotional eating and body image issues. Because for a long time, it felt sort of like innocent where I felt like I had

control because I was like, "Okay. Yes, I'm 30 pounds overweight. But I could fix this. I could certainly fix this." But then when it's like, "Okay, I started having a few health issues here and there," and it started scaring me more.

I tried another program, and it didn't quite – I kind of felt worse after it. And then when I heard about the Insatiable Podcast – So, there was one episode that I listened to it like four or five times. It was about trauma. And I was just like blown away that everything that I learned in one episode. And then I attended a workshop that you did.

And I remember I was coming home from work. I logged on a little bit – a few minutes after. And then you were talking about history and about how women's bodies became currency, a form of currency, when men and started owning land. And it just blew my mind. I'm like, "Am I in the right workshop here? Because it's like –" I'm like, "She's not going to tell me what to eat and when." It was just so different.

And then I was thinking to myself, like, "I've been feeling like this about myself all because of land?" Like, it was just all these – It was so different to me. I thought, "Okay." And then I started with the weighting program. Why am I eating this now? And then it's just the material, it just spoke to me so much. And it's finally like when we were talking about that instinct thing, it's I knew I'm not just like – it's not just me. I knew there were all these influences. But I just didn't have the language, the understanding. And I feel like so many people are in that position as well where they're like, "Something's not right here. But let me just keep listening to these experts that just keep saying the same things over and over again but in different ways." It was just so different. And it just spoke to me. I was like, "Finally." I made the commitment. And I'm happy I did.

[00:33:23] AS: I'm so laughing. I remember that workshop. It reminds me of the first mod – like after we do the kickoff session in Truce with Food where people are like, "Wait how did I go

from like, "I need to eat more vegetables and cut back on sugar?" To like, "I'm afraid people are going to think I'm a disappointment."

[00:33:41] MLV: Yeah, yeah, it's so a conversation where it's so much more complex. Because when we say root causes, like that's like you can't get more root cause than that when you're going back in history. Yeah, it just shed a light on so much of what never made sense to me. But finally, I had language for it. You know?

[00:34:03] AS: Awesome. Thanks. Charlotta.

[00:34:05] CH: Yeah, it's been a long adult life struggling with weight up and down. But now afterwards, I just realized that it's even been an issue more, like a body issue, where it just hasn't been the weight that I started when I was very, very young. But the way then has driven me to try to do certain things. And I've tried a lot of things. But it has not really worked.

Before then, I've also done like therapy and different courses. And most of them has been very brain-based. Finally, I just felt like I was in a corner like banging my head and I thought, "I can't do anymore – Am I going to give up? Or what do I need to do here?"

And then like I believe that when we ask and are open for receiving, it fell in my lap a little bit more or less with nervous system and somatic work, Kimberly Ann Johnson. That's also how I knew about you afterwards. But a few other sources. And that just – like that was new to me. And I thought, "It's got to be something here."

And I think afterwards, my body knew – my mind, which is not the brain. Brain is different from me for the mind. And you talking about that with Stacy, too. I haven't finished that one. I'm excited as heck about it. Because my brain couldn't go any further.

Finally, I found something where the body then was mentioned. And you did actually try to kind of connect with your body and be in your body. And I realized like, "Holy crap! I am not even a tenth in my body to even feel things."

Anyway, so that was really intriguing. And I could tell that this is something I want to get into more. And then you interviewed Kimberly Ann Johnson. That's how I found you then. And I'm like, "This is cool. She's bringing in the food aspect in this that Kimberly doesn't do it all." Or I haven't heard her do that much anyway.

And from then, I found your podcast. Listened to a few things and I thought, "Ah." And then, of course, it was in the fall, the last fall. Then you had a free workshop. I thought, "I got to look into that." Because at some point there I thought, "I got to do something different. I got to get support. I cannot do this alone. It doesn't work." I've tried. I said I've been in groups. But I'm just been trying it on my own. And I need support. I need guidance.

And so, I listened to that. And I was the same almost like Margaret. You weren't talking too much about it then. But it was completely down to how society is. How completely different aspects of it that I'm like, "This is cool." It really fed my brain, too. It's like, "Yes! Exciting. New learning." And the aspect of there is something else to this that I have not been taught or that we don't know about, etc. That's how I got into it.

And I think part of it, I knew. But also, most of it was like I think my being. It just knew. And then you have those calls where you can call and just chat with you if this is okay. And that's one of the first time I've done it. And also, because I felt safe enough for some reason to do it. And it was such an easy call with you. It wasn't a sale pitch at all. It was just truly I could more or less interview you. You can see if I was a fit. And that just made me like I knew already. But that was when I'm like, "Yeah, I got to go for this."

[00:37:18] AS: Charlotta, I love one time you go, "Shit! I wanted something different. And this is really different."

[00:37:24] CH: Yeah, yeah. It is. Because part of it is like we're talking about safety in the body, nervous system. And you come, and you have done research. This is master and what all – I'm not very good with those terms. But you have studied this, too. You're coming in with a immunity to change. You have a concept. It's a good combination. And it tracks my mind. And my body knew, like, "Okay, let's go for it." Your mind is intrigued. It thinks this is interesting. It's new. It's away from the mainstream. I like to be on the what's new or what is a little bit different. I like that. Has always done that. That attracted me. And that you had the body, the safety, the down to earth, which also that I missed a lot. It was the combination. It was just really cool how it all went.

[00:38:12] AS: Yeah.

[00:38:12] CH: And I got to say this one thing, though. I'm going to interrupt you. That it was also at the time I was talking, got some information and got talked to two nutritions and dietitian, etc. And which was great. I've never even taken this step, because even when I was suggested this, I said, "Hell no. Don't even –" I mean, my whole body is like, "No! I can't do it." But then I did. And it felt good.

And also, I'm saying thank God I didn't do that. Nothing against those girls. I think because they were a little different. They were really into intuitive eatings, HAES, the Health at Every Size and everything. But I'm so glad I chose what I did. Yeah.

[00:38:52] AS: Yeah, because it's so much more than just food. And so, Charlotta, we'll start with you. What story were you – kind of did you discover that you were working on interests with food that was causing this lack of safety and then spills over into how we eat? Which then

makes us feel we can't trust our appetite. I love that Mags talked about the self-trust, if we can't trust our instincts. What story were you working on?

[00:39:17] CH: This one is actually comical afterwards when I'm looking at it. And my first – because you asked us to kind of get a focus. You say goal, which had me freaked out. But then you said, "No, it's more of a focus. So, we have something to work through." Which makes sense when you get more into the process. I get it now.

But anyway, so I had written down. I want to eat balanced, nutritious meal that makes me feel satisfied. Or something like now it's about cracking me up. What am I talking about? And then it was funny. When I said this out loud on our first opening circle, you're like, "Mm." And then she said, "Well, maybe we look a little bit different." You said something pleasure with food. And I thought my body just went hot red. It went like, "Are you kidding me?" And then part of me is like, "Well, she's kind of the authority. Oh, yeah, I think she's right here."

And then when we got into it again when we started the process, and I went in more with Laura. We got it actually down to this I only have basic needs. That's how far it went down. That I actually have need to eat, sleep and rest. My cute little satisfying meal, it was about as far away from where I was at.

[00:40:33] AS: It was the tip of the iceberg.

[00:40:33] CH: Yes, to say the least. But I thought that sounded cute. Or I thought that was I was supposed to say. Now, I was like, "Yeah." Anyway. But then it also went a little further as we moved along. It'd come down to my core story. It's that I'm wrong. I'm born wrong came up first. That has lightened up a little bit till more I'm wrong. That is my core story, I would say. Yeah. Or not what I would say. But you helped me a lot through that. You're kind of like, "Oh, shoot. I'm wrong." And I can find that everywhere.

[00:41:01] AS: Yeah. And I love how we started with like pleasure. And the goals that we do in Truce with Food are process-oriented. They're not like outcome-oriented. But you saying your instincts, right? If you can't have basic needs with your instincts met of like sleep, food, people think it's like, "Oh, it's about my needs needing to get met." But if you have a story of I'm wrong, then you're never going to get your needs met because the story tells you, when you have instincts or needs, that you're wrong. And so, it's this vicious cycle.

And so, if you're someone who's listening and you're like, "Well, I can't not put myself first. Or I always am beating myself up." Or whatever. There's a story that's generating all of these seemingly self-sabotaged behaviors that are at the core. And we all have different ones. Thanks for sharing that, Charlotta.

[00:41:47] CH: One thing I just want to add is that, in my family, it was loudly outspoken that eating and sleeping are necessary evil. Of course, that's like, "Okay. I need to sleep. And I got to eat." But that's wrong, because that's necessary evil. I mean, afterwards I'm like, "Okay. Well, that makes me wrong because I have a need to sleep and eat." That furthers that I'm wrong. I think that's an interesting like necessary evil.

[00:42:16] AS: Yeah. Well, I love that you talked about that. Because in one of the food is safety workshops, when we had this discussion about around discipline, it was like no one said – like no one explicitly in my family said be disciplined or this or that. But we have these phrases like sleep and eating are necessary evils.

We use these phrases and all this implicit stuff that we just kind of absorb, right? Like the air that we breathe becomes basically this emotional software of stories. In episode two I talked about like this emotional elephant we're all riding on that we think are who we are versus what we pick up on without being told, without knowing we were picking up on it. I think that's a great example of that.

Yeah, Mags, how about you?

[00:43:02] MLV: Yeah, actually, that's a perfect example what Charlotta was saying when she said do I say the answer I think I'm supposed to say? Or do I say it because my story was a lot about being seen in a negative light? And it's a lot around exceptionalism, and perfectionism and just this fear of both ways it was wrong. Whether I'm seen in a positive light, it's like, "Oh, great. Now I have to keep up." And when you have like imposter syndrome. And so, it's like, "Oh, this is only temporary." But then if I'm seen in a negative light, that self-judgment, it would touch on stories of worth.

It's kind of like what Charlotta is saying is like, "Oh, which version do I give? Which answer do I give?" And accommodating. And again, shutting off the authenticity of who you are and showing up authentically because there's all these other influences telling you that you're supposed to be this way, or you should shrink, or you should –

More specifically, for me it was feeling safe, feeling healthy and where that would lead. Because I just didn't understand my behavior. It was so backward. I would want something in my heart, like truly want it and say that I want it but I would do the exact opposite. And so, I just couldn't understand how just feeling like, "Okay, I –" It just didn't make sense logically. Now I know it makes sense because I was protecting myself. It just seems like it's simple to understand. But for me at that time, it was just going around in circles for decades and I just couldn't understand why I was doing that. And it was always one of my big stress responses is avoidance. I was trapped in that a lot. It's basically like not wanting to be seen in a negative light. And also sometimes a positive light. That equals never trying and always hiding. That was the main overarching theme was like the perfectionism that's in the background that's touching on all this worth, feelings of worth and stuff.

[00:44:55] AS: I love that you shared the part about the risk in the positive light, was I have to keep this up. Even this belief that I have to keep this up. And if I have inadequacy that's driving

the perfectionism, there's so much stress in it not happening, which is it's like I have all this stuff that I want. But there's so much risk in getting it. Because then what else am I going to be expected to do? And I'm already tired. I love that you brought that up because I think most people don't think that they're afraid of success. And yet, if you're in a story, you're going to be afraid on both ends, right? Because they both mean different pressure-filled expectations.

[00:45:36] MLV: Yeah. And it was only recently that I realized that I am way more afraid of the success and the pressure that comes with that. Or the success, how I used to define it, I guess I should say. Versus failing. Because I was thinking of all this. I'm like, "Failing is actually kind of liberating." Because like no one has expectations of you. They're just like, "Oh, whatever."

But when it comes to feeling like you're – let's say you do one thing well and it's like, "Oh, what's next? Oh, gosh! What's next?" Yeah, it's like we were seeing in the community. It's like if someone gives you a compliment and says something nice, it's like, "Oh, that's great." But what if the next day it's something different?

Yeah, it's just always how we talked about in the community, too, of how like the idea of owning and belonging to yourself. That's something that I'm still working on. It doesn't happen overnight. But it's just – for me, yeah, it was those two things that, whether it's positive or negative, it was a big charge for me. I would avoid a lot. And I feel like, yeah, I'm starting to get to know my myself more and what matters to me, which takes practice and time. You know?

[00:46:40] AS: Yeah, yeah. Well, let's lead into – I love that you mentioned the perfectionism because I think that's something, I can tell you, a lot of people listening can relate to. And so, what values were running your life that kind of fed this story, right? We'll use food puns here about what you thought you should be? Needed to be? Had to be in your story around needing to be perfect? Otherwise, it was a catastrophe basically? I mean, I'm putting words in your mouth. But this is a shorthand. What values? You said perfectionism.

[00:47:12] MLV: Honestly, it's everything that society and the big influences in my life told me I should value. Perfectionism, being exceptional. And, for me, beauty was a huge thing. And the very narrow definition that society gives you. Or let's say people in my community. Or it's just big influences that it's everything that I'm told that I should value at the expense of everything else.

It's saying like anything that is results-oriented, or staying ahead of the game, or like it's just everything that I feel I'm being told this is what matters and this is how you stay ahead. And then you're successful if you have all of these things that check off these boxes. Whereas there's like so much more to your values that there could be so much more than just those very few specific things that you're being fed on the regular by your close circle or family.

Yeah, for me, it was like it's all the predictable stuff, you know? Well, at least what I feel is predictable for a lot of people is like beauty, very narrow definition of beauty, and then perfectionism and then just like this success. I guess, how it's defined out there? Versus me defining it on my own and what that looks like.

[00:48:27] AS: Yeah. And can you say, since we're on those values? And then we'll circle to Charlotta. How those values kept you stuck in your story? It's like we often think values are this great thing and we should align our lives by them. But often, we haven't examined. I love that you said it's what society told me, right?

And again, we all do this up until our early 20s. It's just how we develop. This isn't like again that we're wrong or anything like this. But we think that there is the way versus a way, right? The answer versus an option. How we were socialized? And so, can you say how these values? Because on the surface it's like perfectionism can be a badge of honor. Discipline is a badge of honor, right? It's like all this stuff. Beauty, we'll get more into expanding that definition of beauty. It's not that these values were in – some of them are inherently bad about how we're defining them. But how were these values of this is how I'm being good. But it's also keeping

you stuck in your story and actually compromising your safety and sense that you could trust yourself.

[00:49:24] MLV: Yes. Being someone who's, I would say, very spiritual. And I have a lot of depth where I don't just – like, the superficial stuff, it doesn't speak to me as much. It feels like, back to what we're saying, is like I was cutting off a part of myself to be good or what I was thinking means good. And I was tending to all these other things that I'm supposed to care about and to what degree I'm supposed to care about.

Meanwhile, like what we're saying about instinct, is like there's something there that just doesn't feel right. There are all these other things that I could care about or could have cared about. And in turn, you end up feeling like a failure. Because let's say, for example, you don't stick to the typical advice out there that's like a lot of like brute force kind of discipline when it comes to diet culture. Or you end up feeling like more of a failure. And of course, then I'm unsafe. Because I'm back in my story. I'm back feeling worthless. I'm back – It's like this constant hamster on a wheel kind of thing going in circles. And it's the same cycle of, "Okay. I'm being good. I'm doing everything I'm supposed to do. But how come I'm still not measuring up here? I'm not – I don't feel like I'm succeeding or I'm failing. I'm doing what I'm supposed to do and then falling short." And then that keeps me in my story. And then wanting to avoid and hide. It was just like a constant loop. It was because not even being aware of everything that's possible other than those very specific values.

[00:50:56] AS: Yeah. I love that you mentioned and called out discipline by brute force. Because, again, in the second food of safety gathering, I did just kind of a little history lesson that religion really – I mean, the one of the original definitions of discipline was learning. It came from disciple, right? Like you learn, right? Versus brute force.

But over the course of – and again, with this intro of this episode is all about, is like discipline has become about control. Not that discipline is inherently bad. But is it effective if we're only defining it by control when there's much of the world that we can't control?

And I know when the food is safety gathering, so many people wrote to me afterwards of like biggest aha. Like, I've been defining discipline as control. And no wonder it's backfiring. I just love that you use that your – thank you for sharing your life to bring home that point that happens to so many of us. Versus, yeah, we can still value being disciplined. And we'll get to that. But there's other options of how to think about this other than brute force and overriding your instincts.

[00:52:03] MLV: Yeah. And that's something as well I only learned from you as well what the actual meaning of discipline used to be and then what it became. A lot of it is like we're just picking up all this stuff and then running with it when it's like, "Do we even question things?"

Yeah, it's just helpful. Like I was saying, to sift through layers and just finally have some understanding of how we came to be. And yeah, it's worth looking deeper, I would say.

[00:52:31] AS: Yeah. Well, and I think about – I talked about this on an old podcast. But thinking about discipline specially to align with your spiritual values of devotion, right? That to me is like the best version of discipline. It's like I'm devoted to figuring this out. I'm devoted to my humanity, right? All of the things that I have to actually really encompass to have sustainable solutions. And then it feeds into this really true value of yours, of spirituality, if it's about learning and all that kind of stuff. This is how it gets evolved.

Charlotta, what about you? What values – You had this story of I'm wrong, right?

[00:53:08] CH: Yeah.

[00:53:08] AS: And for people listening, 'I'm wrong' comes with shame, right? And shame comes with being [inaudible 00:53:13] and outside. What values were running your story that you thought you needed to be were good of how to be to try to kind of – to be right would be your mind?

[00:53:24] CH: Yeah. And I didn't grow up in the US. In my early 70s, or in the 70s I should say, in a socialist country, which has my perspective is a little bit different from you, guys, as I can tell the times. Because it wasn't as driven – and also from my family, of course, which is more farmer background, real farmer. Like, out on the land.

And also, Sweden – well, all the Scandinavian countries are Lutheran, and church and state was one. Like in Sweden, it didn't separate till 2000. In Norway, it's still, the state in church is one. But anyway, but we are also – the Scandinavian countries are also the most secular in the world. It's interesting. Anyway, the socialist country were values – So, it's a big mix in the sense of especially with my background then where agriculture, which means that you work. Your body is just there to work and produce. I mean, you got to make a living by physically be out working all the time. There's always something to do. The body was not for beauty or – so, I'm coming from more where taking care of your body, that's a second deal. The body is just there to produce.

It strikes me also that the other side of it, when people are talking like in the US, is going to look pretty. You're going to spend – For me, that's vanity to do diets, to exercise. That's time you spend on yourself and not for the society or for your family also.

And my family, it's a typical patriarchy system. This is the thing that when Max talked about, all of a sudden, he goes back to women being currency. This is where it blew my whole thing up when my values that when you're talking about the patriarchy and how I really started to understand that. Like, "Oh, my God! I'm as ingrained in that as you can ever be. I'm wrong because I was not born a man." That went deeper for me. Then it's like, "Shoot, I'm actually –

I'm trying to be a man because I grew up in those values, really hard value." And also, my first couple jobs were with man-dominated workplaces. And it's much easier to be a man in this world. It's made for man. It's not made for –

[00:55:45] MLV: 100%. [inaudible 00:55:46].

[00:55:50] CH: Yeah. I mean, you realize this. Now, afterwards, like when your eyes are open, like, "Holy crap!" But we swim in those waters. So, you don't see the water. And then we get to hear those perspective, all of a sudden like, "Oh, my God, my story is just like my body is the machine. You do this and something comes out." Or rather – I mean, you spend all time on your body. And if you do – anyways, it's mind-blowing looking back now. It's like, "How did I survive?" But I did because I used the strategies of not trying to fit in. Discipline, extremely important. You do what the authorities say. Like, you have an authority in the family, but also in the society. The teachers the authority. You do not say anything against the teacher.

And also, how we learned was like you just learn it by heart. No questioning. No thinking. And, yeah, the outside is – you measure up – My views and my values were like I had none of my own till I realized that I do have values. I just didn't know how they were hidden in there and how they have really kept me stuck in my story and form my story.

[00:56:58] AS: Yeah, I love that. For you, I love that you gave that different context because we do have different people in different countries, right? And it is so different, like that idea. Because Mags and I grew up in North America, right? Where it's like beauty is so focused. But in your upbringing, it was like why would you do that, right? That's time away from work. I love that you bring out that nuance and stuff, right?

[00:57:22] CH: Back then, anyway. It sure is turned around now.

[00:57:25] AS: Yeah, yeah.

[00:57:26] CH: But it was different then, because it was also hippie around here. Like, more natural. More secular like I said. The body isn't just something awful that you have to hide. And when I grew up here, it's less common. The body was okay to be shown naked. Kids don't have to be covered up. They can be kids. It was a big aha when I come to the US. It is different. And, whoa, they're even dressed making sure that we can't even see naked kids naturally running around.

[00:57:55] AS: That's not very –

[00:57:56] CH: Yeah. Yeah. So, the body there. Like, the puritans, that you get much more – Yeah, it gets very obvious to me that the body is much more of a – it was different from how I grew up in the sense that the body wasn't so special for the – it was special for what it could produce, not produce what it was being.

[00:58:17] AS: Yeah. Well, and I also think about with the kids and stuff. I mean, part of the puritanical thing was like sexuality, right? Like repressing sexuality. It's like seeing people around naked, it's like if we're not hyper – when you suppress hyper sexuality, then the culture rebounds. The same way when we restrict, we then binge. If you restrict it, then the society becomes hypersexual in these weird ways.

And so, in Sweden, which is one of the most feminist countries, we have – it's like we're just not sexualizing, right? We're not making sex bad or good. It just, "So, why can't we have more nudity?" Right? It's like that neutral. I love that example.

[00:58:54] CH: Yeah.

[00:58:56] AS: Yeah. You have these values of, basically, like production. The body is for production work. And a lot of the patriarchal values around authority, hierarchy, all that kind of stuff. And how do you think those were keeping you stuck in your story, especially if you

have this core story of, "I'm not a man, I'm wrong." How do you think that was keeping you stuck in that story?

[00:59:20] CH: Well, how can you be right if you're a woman and not – I mean, if you're not a man, I mean, you're just like, "Okay. I can't really change that." I guess I could, but not then anyway. There was not – Yeah, I'm not going to go there. But you keep in the loop of like – and also, what really happened is that I've seen the feminine as very, very weak and not valued. And that's also where I was quite sensitive and really was interest in now I know it's like more into spirituality, where that was not in my family. We never went to church. No real religion. Though, religion and spirituality doesn't mean the same.

But I was drawn to it. But I couldn't get any outlet for it, and which I also think is much more of my feminine side. And I don't say this against masculine. But I have a lot of toxic masculinity that I was driving me and that I valued. And then I'm like looking at those values, really, they kept me away from not the – Well, for me feminine is softer. And it's not that men can't be soft. It has nothing to do with that. It's masculine and feminine. It's not about men and women. But I didn't trust myself. I couldn't trust my body.

Here I am getting a period. You can't be productive if you're having a period actually. You get days out of the month where I can't do certain things. And also taking those needs that I'm not quite sure where I'm going with this.

[01:00:51] AS: No. I think it's a great example. I mean, having a period. If all your value – And what's tricky about values is right. Some are centered some aren't, right?

[01:01:00] CH: No.

[01:01:01] AS: But if the top value is working and then you have a period where you just don't have the same strength all four weeks of the month, then you feel wrong for that. Rather than why is it even set up like this?

[01:01:15] CH: Yes. And also, like, there isn't room – For me anyway, was just really kept me stuck in like not being who I am, of course. I think we all have that. We can't – I would compare like since I was with men. I'm not as strong enough as them. But I got to fight. I got to try. I got to. I got to do this.

I will strive for something that I don't say that women can't be as strong. For goodness gracious, it's not about that. But I was reaching for things that I had to prove myself. And no one told me that. That was not that people would, "Oh, you got to do that even if you're a woman." It was my way of like, "I got to try to do this. I got to push myself. I got to push myself." But my body has other needs as a woman. I didn't get it. It took me 50 years to get there.

[01:02:02] AS: Well, and the other thing that strikes me is what you were saying. And of course, we're talking about the archetypes of feminine and masculine. And anyone, I did an episode a couple years ago on that. You could Google that. But we also talked about it in episode before it was Sil Reynolds about archetypally. If you're a yogi, it's the yin and the yan. Or traditional Chinese medicine, feminine is yin. Masculine is yan.

But what you were saying I loved, Charlotta, is that like you said the feminine is more soft. And there's strength in softness. But we're taught that to be strong is just the purely toxic masculinity version of strong. If you're someone who wants to be strong, that's a value I have. But understanding that there's a lot of ways to define that, right?

And something that I hear, especially when we get to the next question about spirituality even, right? That definition has gone under radical revision for you. But I think that's what you were saying, right? Is like there's this – I think the only way to be strong is to try to just be more and

more of this one version of strong, which is overriding all my instincts, right? For sleep, food. That those are necessary evils. So, just get them over with. Not expanding that strength can also be softness of tuning in.

[01:03:12] CH: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

[01:03:13] AS: Did I say that correctly? I mean, I don't want to –

[01:03:15] CH: Yes, yeah, yeah, absolutely. Yes.

[01:03:17] AS: Yeah, wonderful.

[01:03:18] CH: I think softness is about – I mean, to me, since that's the hardest thing to do, that takes some serious strength. It takes some serious guts and courage. So, softness to me is beautiful.

[01:03:32] AS: Yeah, yeah. All right we're going to take a short break, and then we're going to get back into your new values.

[BREAK]

[01:03:44] AS: Ali here popping in to let you know, if you're enjoying the season's food is safety theme and feel in a place you want to take action, which is where transformative results unfold, come join me and other intrepid health rebels who hate small talk for my free food and safety gathering series.

In this series, I'll share practical application tools for your own stress eating and workshop a few participant stress eating challenges and we'll continue the conversation that these episodes have sparked. The next gathering, which is on a Zoom call, is on Wednesday, January 4th, 2023.

We've already had two gatherings. When you sign up for the January call, you can access the past gatherings. The feedback has been amazing as usual on these calls.

If you really want 2023 to be different for you in terms of food and really the way that you feel your body has held you back, I suggest checking them out at alishapiro.com/foodassafety. The link is also in the podcast show notes wherever you listen to your podcast.

And again, these gatherings are free. They're casual, come as you are and so nourishing. I wish I could read all of the feedback I've gotten from these. Really, they're so good in part because of the conversations we've had from those who have joined.

Even showering is optional. These gatherings answer the where do I start to have a truce with food? And are designed for those of you feeling the call or curious about truce trees with food to know where to start.

Truce with Food 2023, my signature boutique group program, opens for registration on January 9th. And there's an early bird special to save \$500 that runs from January 9th through the 16th. I'll also be offering a workshop on January 11th about the research that shows how smart goals don't work for eating and exercise goals. And what to do instead? And I'll also be hosting the Truce with Food alumni open house so you can hear from past participants about their experience and where they are now.

If you join our food as safety gatherings, you'll receive all this information to sign up for all this free stuff. You can also join my list at alishapiro.com to receive invites to all the fun stuff going on in January. Truce with Food opens once a year. If you feel called to this adventure of a lifetime, I hope you'll join us.

Okay. Now back to our episode.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[01:06:12] AS: All right. So, when we took our short break we were talking about the values that we had in redefining them here and there, which we've hinted at. I was wondering if, Mags, you can tell us through the truth with food process, what values fell by the wayside? And which ones were redefined? And which new ones arose to help you really get out of this hustling for perfectionism and then feeling like everything else less than perfect was you had to avoid, and hide and shrink yourself?

[01:06:40] MLV: Yes. I feel like this answer could be like 45 minutes long. I'll try. Okay.

[01:06:45] AS: I love it. I love it. I love it. We're radicalizing, everybody.

[01:06:49] MLV: Yeah. I think there's just so much. Okay. When it comes to anything that was before like the teachings in diet culture. So, all of that, it actually repels me right now. It's just – Yeah, it didn't really speak to me before. But again, I was trying to be good. I would follow those things.

Anything that's like the rigid plans, the external authorities dictating what I'm supposed to be doing with my body and overriding my instincts and all of that. And it's not to say that you can't learn things and you can't take things away from what's out there, but it's just the predictable same recycled stuff. For me, it's like, no, it doesn't speak to me. And I don't even pay attention to it anymore. That's one of the things that fell.

When it comes to redefying. As you know, I've had like a long entanglement with beauty. And so, redefining, that has been interesting. And so, I'm kind of enjoying that. But even with things like when it comes to superficial stuff like makeup and stuff, I was – like the other day we went out, I was looking – like there's so many tutorials out there. And I'm so behind on what I used to care about.

And so, I realized, as an example, that, "Okay. I can have like a a basic or a little bit more than basic knowledge of how to apply." And, "Okay. As long as I look good, I feel like I look good." I don't need to know every single product. Whereas like the old me was like I would have felt like a little bit behind and a little bit – To me, it's like there's only so much time, energy to care about certain things. It's like how do I – I'm still tweaking, you know, like how to redefine beauty. It's not even just the makeup. It's like what makes me feel beautiful. Like, not rushing. Like, not – things that came up where I was like, "Oh, I never thought of it that way." That's one of the things. And also, of course –

[01:08:39] AS: Wait. I want to stop you there. Because I think this is an important one that a lot of people listening can understand that beauty. And do you remember the conversation we had where you're like, "Oh, you mean I don't have to just like pretend to say that I feel beautiful when I don't?" And I was like, "No. That's not what I'm talking about."

But can you talk about that kind of embodiment of beauty versus just looking at a picture of ourselves? But the actual felt sense, kind of what Charlotta was saying. When we actually bring the body into change? And can you talk a little bit more about slowing down or surrounding? Because beauty isn't just what we look like. But, yet, how we feel in our body can determine how we experience beauty. I just want to like slow down right there.

[01:09:21] MLV: Yes. Okay. Before, when it comes to like cliches stuff, it was like, "Okay, get a manicure. Blah-blah-blah." It just was like – I'm like, to me, it didn't make sense. But when we broke it down and we were like, "Okay, for example, being in nature makes me feel beautiful."

For me, I realized like rushing a lot is I don't feel good when I just roll out of bed and then next thing you know I'm out somewhere. I realize like, "Okay. Taking my time with things makes me feel beautiful." Even if it is something like now we're just on a podcast, but I put a bit of concealer on because I'm like, "It makes me feel more awake."

It's just finding different ways where, like you said, you're embodying it and it's not just a picture on your fridge or something. It's actually feeling – I guess, it's about feeling good and feeling empowered. And so –

[01:10:11] AS: And doing it for yourself. That's what I hear. We are not on video. But you're like, "I feel more awake when I have concealer or foundation." I forget what you said.

[01:10:18] MLV: Yeah, concealer.

[01:10:19] AS: That like actually including yourself versus just objectifying yourself.

[01:10:24] MLV: Yes, exactly. And so, yeah, it doesn't have to be so – even now working from home, I always thought, "Oh, I'm putting on makeup. I'm doing it for myself." But then when I work from home, I would never wear makeup. But now it's kind of like I'm just tweaking a few things where it's like, "Okay, what feels beautiful to me?"

Yeah, it could be as simple as like when we're talking about makeup. But it could be – it's so broad the definition. And that's why it's taking me time to see, "Okay, what makes me feel –" And even with brand names, for example. Do I care about trends? MI can care a bit, but not to the extent where I'm going to spend like a crazy amount on a purse that is – You know what?

It's just like, for me, it's been constantly these little tweaks. And it doesn't have to be all in the non-superficial and it doesn't have to be all in the superficial. It's kind of like the spectrum where it's, "Okay. What feels good?" And this is kind of like something I printed the other day from the program. It's like it's not technical, technical problems, not technical answers. It's you figuring out out as you go and accumulating your own data to be like, "Okay. I feel my best when –" And then it could be you know any of those examples. Being in nature could be for one person. Looking good and having just really basic makeup could be for someone else.

Just my definition of it just blue wide open where I'm not just fixated on my weight and this one part of myself where it's just so much more now. That's definitely something that I'm still in the process of redefining and it's just been feeling good.

Yeah. And also, tied to that is like progress and success have been redefined because I'm not using the same benchmarks of I'm not measuring it the same way that I did. It just ties in as well, where it's like there are so many more markers that we can look at instead of just very superficial end result of things where there could be so much more than just like what's in front of you.

[01:12:22] AS: Yeah. And I just want to say, do you remember you shared in the community once about how to speak to this? How you're really embodying this? It's like someone saw you and they noticed that you had like lost weight or they said that you did. And you were like, "Look. It still feels nice. But it's not the main thing."

And you were talking about perfectionism, right? And it's like, for a lot of people, if they start to lose weight, if they're – even if it's – Again, it's that success. But if it's driven by this shame-based if I gain weight or if I don't lose weight, other people are going to judge me. Versus I'm making more of these other changes that are fulfilling me. And it's actually for me.

You were like, "It was great." But I know so many people are like, "Once I start losing weight, then I tell myself I can treat myself more." And then I'm – that little bit of slack. I can't give myself that slack. The issue isn't the slack. It's that you losing weight is filling into this story of how you're being good and perfect. And that feels like a hustle. Versus the more that you're self-expressed and showing up with what's fulfilling for you, the less that perfectionism – I hear you talking about that in the nuance of like, "Well, maybe it's about a bag. Maybe it's about makeup." But it's all these other things. Because the value of perfectionism, being self-expressed and in choice as we say in Truce with Food and following your instincts is you're just learning to value that more than the perfectionism. But I just want to talk. I know that I'm kind

of on at my own tangent now. But that progress and success, I just wanted to give that example for people. Because –

[01:13:48] MLV: It felt like a bon – It was just a bonus. It was like, "Oh, really? I think I have everything says that I have lost weight. But anyway, let me go on with my day." Whereas before I would be on a high. And like I would – I haven't even weighed myself yet because I'm not even that curious to know. And it's not even because I'm avoiding. It's just a very neutral fact that it still feels good.

And like I was talking to Charlotta earlier this morning. I was like, "There's still a goal of wanting to get healthier and lose weight." There's so much more to health than just that. It's just one of the things. It's not the leading thing, like you were saying. It just feels good to not center on that, on a number, or on exactly how I look. It's such a bonus, but it's not the main thing. And yeah, it's –

[01:14:35] AS: Yeah. Well, and I love this conversation because we talk a lot about – Like, not a lot – so much in Truce with Food. But like navigating wanting to lose weight. And I think when it's shame-based motivation, that which is what most of us are driven by. Versus it doesn't mean – And this is nuanced of like I still can want to lose weight. But how I understand how I have to go about it is different? And I also understand that it can't be the main driver. Because that just feeds into – even though our stories often aren't about food, they also are. They also do play out in food in our body. It's like this cannot be the only thing, because then that's just feeding into I've got to be hustling, right? Because we put so much stock on our weight as whether or not we're worthy. Versus, "You know, what makes me feel worthy and whole is self-expressing these values that are actually important to me."

I just want to bring that up, because weight is like obviously people who listen to this are like thinking about weight loss often. I think your example brings up so much of the nuance of it.

[01:15:36] MLV: Yeah. And I think without – Even if you're someone who you consider yourself being knowledgeable. Like, it's something that how would you – It's so on such a subconscious level all that's going on where it's kind of until you actually connect – make certain connections and have that insight, it's like you're just kind of operating not even realizing. It's like a status quo that you're doing all these things that you didn't realize you are. It's just helpful to go through the layers and have that support.

[01:16:05] AS: Yeah, I love that. What about you, Charlotta?

[01:16:10] CH: Well, my biggest thing is actually the masculine to the feminine. And I am very happy of the masculine qualities that I have when they're in the balanced masculine. I mean, that. And I'm really happy about that.

But also, but it's been the feminine has been the struggle, has been something that I've seen as like weak and not enough. But also, I'm so happy that I can – now the biggest part is like the feminine is just intriguing, it's cool, it's different. That attracts my like rebellion, too. It's like, "Oh, let's get into something else. How can I go –"

For a while I was like, when you're getting all this information you almost get, "Man! I hate everything about the masculine." And I don't, because it has so much greatness in it. And also – the feminine aspects is like it just grew clear to me what it is.

Nature for me is masculine and feminine. Nature is really important to me and has been. But I see the shift in that like that's a value to me. We need the fresh air. We need the sun. We need the water. It produces food and everything. But nature to me has gotten a deeper – Deeper for me now. It's more like the actual roots. I want to get into the roots. I want to get into my roots. And where are they? And that has naturally led me into my femininity, my maternal line that I have not neglected, but have not been connected to it at all because it hasn't been valid or valued and anything.

That has been absolutely amazing. And just feel that like the support and the trust. The female values of like receiving or just being, "Slow down. I don't have to hustle. I don't—" Because the masculine in me where I came from before is like you control the damn nature. That's something that's controllable. You decide the seasons more or less with how society is changing. How can we extend the seasons longer? How can we produce more? Da-da-da-da. And that's been – now I'm like I'm looking at how is nature working? When is it time to plant a seed? When is this the right place on Earth to even plant the seed? Maybe this is where we need to just have open prayer. Comes close to my heart since I'm leaving Montana now with a cattle ranch. And is this sustainable what we're doing? Can we listen and really be more in tune with what nature shows us? And that's then down to me then. Can I feel my own nature? Can I feel how I work? Is it certain times of the day when I feel better that I have more energy? Is it certain times that I need the rest? Can I tune into that? And that's to really value my body, that's the change that it has so much getting emotional. But this is – it has the knowledge. If I can listen, if I can feel it, you'll tell me. Just the acknowledgment of that that I have not been able to hear it because it hasn't been valued.

And it makes sense now. It's not me being wrong that I haven't been able to feel my body. It has not been supported. I haven't had any guidance. It just hasn't been the value for other people either. I'm excited about it. It's hard. But I'm excited about it. And I just really – that's the biggest change is about that. That it's dwelling into the feminine.

[01:19:28] AS: That is so beautiful. And Charlotta, I mean, I don't know. This could be its own podcast in and of itself. But what about how you view spirituality and where God exists now? [inaudible 01:19:41] as a result of some of this?

[01:19:43] CH: Yeah. Never been religious. Haven't fit in. Been really wanting to looking for something. And then the type of – it's Lutheran. And the area where I grew up is very, very conservatively Lutheran, too. Almost into Catholicism, which means that the body is a sin. You hide it. You don't go there. I think the conspiracy here is that, of course, they've done that

because they don't want us to find God, or the goddess, the mother. And because I believe that the goddess is in the body. And that would be the last place we would dare to look for, because that's where sin is.

Yeah. I mean, if we all – if it's that simple, we all have our own body, that would mean that we would have our own authority. We would be – and that would crumble the whole society structure.

[01:20:37] AS: Well, do you remember us chatting about how when you were younger, though? Now that you can look back, you can – I mean, you were seeking this spiritual connection. This has been a longing.

[01:20:48] CH: Yes, absolutely. Yes.

[01:20:50] AS: Yeah. I love how this is talking – Because I think sometimes, we do have these values that are part of who we are. But again, how societies define them. And now coming into, you're finding God, right?

[01:21:05] CH: Yeah. Yeah, mm-hmm. And I can say God now without getting these shivers about it. Because God was a masculine outside thing, an authority, like I said. Like our fathers, our teachers and all that. That was God. But he was on the top. So, he damn sure would have the width to crack down when it – and God now is like, "Holy crap! God is Awesome. God is inside me. And we're pretty damn awesome."

[01:21:33] AS: Yeah.

[01:21:34] CH: I decide what God is. I decide what Goddess is.

[01:21:40] AS: I love it. This is this is deep work. When we say we go to the root, we're going to

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[01:21:45] CH: Yeah. Exactly. And also, looking at my roots wasn't like, "Oh, I got to dig and analyze." Well, I guess, "Ha! ha!" Pun. You dig in. But it was more like following the roots not for me to drag him up. It was following them down that I'm not going to be controlling them. Rip it up and see what's down on the root. Because my inner protectors, they know that I can rip things in pieces and be a little bit fast and forward. It's been interesting to just follow where I'm going and not have so much of an agenda and not being so rushed and doing it fast. That's the big part.

[01:22:18] AS: Yeah. Well, and that's valuing that receiving, right? Valuing that is emerging from the feminine. And also, I just love, too, your example of slowing down. It then enables you to honor. I think what you were describing is the cycles of nature, the cycles of ourselves. And so, it's just crazy how certain values will then just totally reorient like what we see in the world to your point of like, "Oh, my God, are we trying to over-produce the land?" What is the real cycle here versus what's been manufactured?

I love that example, because slowing down is something that has – Like, mags, I'm still tweaking on the slowing down. And it's always a work in progress because you learn more layers. But I cannot believe how I view things so much differently now that I really valued slowing down.

Charlotta, we'll pick up with you and then we're going to pretty much wrap up here. What's different today in your story based on self-authoring your values versus the default normal? And you kind of alluded to this in this question. But let me ask the question again. I kind of jumped. I did not slow down there. Work in progress. What's different today in your story based on self-authoring your values versus the default "normal values" that guide our culture? What do you think is different in your sense of wrongness? And even if there is a sense of wrongness versus –

[01:23:42] CH: Yeah. Well, no. Yes, it blooms up every day. I had a case of I'm wrong right before we did the podcast that, "Oh, I'm not going to do it right." And then I was like, "What is right here, Charlotta?" So, yeah. So, it catches all the time. But the thing is just like I said now, it's my relation to being wrong. Or to my story, the relationship like, "Okay, here we go." And I can be way more compassionate with it. I'll catch it sooner.

And also, there is many, many, many examples where I don't see myself as wrong anymore or not see myself as wrong. But because that hasn't really been – it's been subconscious that I'm wrong. But anyway, it's like I – the difference is that I feel more connected. Because the feminine is it's connection. It's receiving. And that is a huge thing for me that, where I'm coming from, like you got to do it. You got to be disciplined. You got to do it right. You got to do it alone. If you use support, then you didn't really do it.

And now, it's like the more I trust myself and can feel it's like I have agency. That's the thing that I was new to me, whether you've been talking about self-authoring, like my agency, my own agency. It's been really been ingrained in that that I trust myself enough to reach out for support. I do not know everything. If I did, I wouldn't be where I am. I wouldn't have struggle with food. And wait, that's just not the only thing. But if we're talking about that here, I would not have that. I would have been found in that safety much sooner if I could figure it out alone.

It's been huge with a group here. I feel more confident reaching out because I decide what I'm picking. I'm going out to shop. If I'm looking for a doctor or someone, I do the choosing. I'm just not taking what's available for me, which also means that I'm like realizing, "I can't do this alone." And I got people in the world that really has my back. And I got two right here close to me. Yeah, and I got my own back.

And I also know that I'm not sharing and asking for help and just rambling like randomly. I know to be careful, too, because not everyone can hold this and can be as the support that I need. And the more I know what I need and what my values are, it's easier for me to kind of feel my

way around, too. And that's when my intuition can be helpful because it has been through a lot. So, then my intuition has grown now enough where it's quite quick. I can catch, like, now this is not a fit. And much sooner, like this will work. I have support here. That's been a big thing. To be included. To not making myself wrong. To put me on the outside that I'm wrong. I can never fit in.

[01:26:28] AS: I love it. I love it. Also, what about – because one of – and again, you don't have to to share if you don't want. But what about one of the big things of, because now you don't feel wrong, you can almost admit to yourself that some of your mental health stuff has been hard.

[01:26:47] CH: Yes. Yeah, heaven's sake. We're supposed to be open. Oh, mental health anymore. It's okay. Everyone talks about it. Baloney. And it shows a lot here. Just a couple days ago when we lost Twitch, because I think it means to me that we lost him. We lost him. The world lost him. Because we haven't been doing what we ought to do to help people enough.

Anyway, I don't know how long. But I've been diagnosed bipolar mostly more on the depression side. And it's been more okay. But it is a lot of shame. Whether or not we say that it's more accepted. It's not. Because it's not. Doesn't fit in. It makes us needing to take other measures. Then it's harder.

For me, and that just that I had a breakthrough, that it's been really hard for me. And it is hard when it hits. And, yeah, it's been struggle many times. Just the acknowledgment to say it out loud. Ali, let me say that out loud. And even to think it. And it made me struggle. We want to be – this society doesn't like when we struggle and take up room or don't produce. It's been hard.

But I don't say that depression, and I can't even say that it is because I'm right in the middle of really riding it now of feeling in and just not making it wrong about me. But it's liberating in the sense that how do I relate to this? Is depression making me wrong? No. Not so much anymore.

And then I had a little case of hypomania here a while back. And that was awesome because I hadn't had it for a while to ride that too. That's when I realized how much shame it had been in that. I thought it was all my shame was in depression. But depression is easy almost then because you hide and you isolate. Like, the void. Where if you go into the void [inaudible 01:28:36] like in our stress how we cope with it. Then you can avoid. But when you get more into hypomania, then you're out visible. How to relate to that? That, "Oops! This is a side of me that I'm excited." Now I know when I'm feeling fairly good. But it is exciting and it's freaking hard. And then it then comes to comparison, too, that, "Oh, people have it much worse. Thank, God, I don't have that." And it's hard. It's really hard.

[01:29:03] AS: Yeah. I think that's so important, because if we have this story of I'm wrong, then often we hide these things from ourselves. It can't – it's hard. It's because it's me versus it's hard to deal with. And I love that you brought in that, yeah, as a culture we're trying to destigmatize it. But it's not trickling down enough to really, I think, yet – Like, people say, "Well, here's a hotline." Well if you're depressed and suicidal, you don't have the energy to call a hotline.

I mean, I get the people – and I also don't want to – that has helped a lot of people. It's not all about –

[01:29:35] CH: Sorry. Because that's been a – I shouldn't say – But that advice is great and it's been detrimental at times, too, when you're at rock bottom and you have a friend telling you, "Here is an 800 number." That is pretty tough. That's the least thing you'll do if you're severely depressed. So, yeah. But I mean, it has helped a lot of people. Absolutely. It's both. And I don't think it's enough.

[01:30:04] AS: Right. exactly. But I think – I mean, do you – and does it feel like relief being able to admit that it's hard? I think that's –

[01:30:14] CH: Yes, yes. That has changed. That's why this is so new because this was just a – is it a month and a half, Ali, when I said that out loud?

[01:30:24] AS: Yeah.

[01:30:24] CH: To be myself? It's new to me. And it opens up the other side. Then I see people with so much more compassion, too. It's like that's a struggle. It's not a competition. Of course, certain things are. I still do think it's more awful than other things. But I can see that it's hard for them. And I can see how we don't make it – we're afraid to say that it's hard. People have loosen their husband, etc. But it's okay. I'm like, "That's not okay. It's freaking hard." Let's stay with that.

I mean, and then you get to more like people – I want to give them time because that's what I haven't given my time. So, that makes it like I want to give other people time. Stay with this. This is hard. This is how we connect. This is how we get to be human again.

[01:31:10] AS: I love that you brought that up, as like the more we are with our own difficulty, it's not selfish. It's not taking away. It actually just gives you more compassion for other people and know how to better support them. Like you said, give them time. Actually, lean into it and tell them it's hard. Versus, "Well, at least this." It's like, "Oh –"

[01:31:32] CH: Yesterday, I was really nervous. I reached out to Maga and Ali and said I'm nervous. Plus, I had a little bit of a jet lag deal where I thought I was – but I just reached out and said that. And the standard answer or the easy answer would have been to get back, "Oh, you'd be fine, Charlotta. You're great." And I had said that I want someone to tell me, "I got you back. We got it." And that's exactly what I got back from Ali and Mags. Like, "We got you. We got this." It's hard to hold things. It's easier – And I can see that not everyone can. It's easy to say, "Oh, it's okay. You'll be fine." And other people have the same. But what we really need is just to have someone said, "Yeah, this is fucking hard. I got your back."

I hear the we. Because I never heard the we. It's always been, "Oh, you can do it." So, here's someone saying, "We can do it. We got you." I was like, "Whoa!" It changes everything.

[01:32:25] AS: And that's totally in line with the feminine, which is just about what you're saying. Like, yeah, it's hard. And you have to visit it for ourselves first before we can kind of bring it out into other things to other people and who's safe. I love that you said, too, it's like discerning who you can share it with or not. Versus thinking everyone can hold it.

[01:32:46] MLV: It's such an important conversation. And even when we're talking about with what happened to Twitch and everyone's saying like, "Yeah, check in on people." But then I was thinking, often, when you check in people are like, "Oh, yeah, I'm fine." The very people that they're not going to open up either. I think we're just – because of the way that our culture is sometimes it's like we don't even know what it looks like to truly check in. And I think that's kind of –

[01:33:11] CH: Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! Girl. Sorry. You hit the nail. Say that again, please. Amen.

[01:33:18] MLV: I forgot what I just said.

[01:33:21] CH: We don't even know how to check in on – How to check in on people.

[01:33:23] MLV: Yeah, I think people are well-meaning. But we've been all socialized in similar ways where it's kind of like – when I was thinking about it, there are a lot of times I ask people, "Hey, how are you doing?" And, "Oh, yeah, I'm good." "Are you sure? Because –" And so, it's kind of like also not knowing how to do that. And when you're both talking about holding and sitting with it is so important. But I think even though people are caring and they're well-intentioned, it's like on both sides like we might not know how to do that.

[01:33:54] AS: 100%. It's a great point. Yeah. Oh, yeah. Well, I also think about, too, part of why it's so hard is like if we look in the health and wellness space, right? Everything should be able to be cured if you know a functional medicine protocol. I mean – Do you know what I mean?

And again, we've made it since Covid, since the stuff we've made help such a moral issue. But then it adds this layer of shame. So then, people want to say they're fine because they've internalized the story of it's me. Versus, "Look. Functional medicine is great, and it doesn't work for everybody. It just doesn't." It is not as great. And it's not the whole story. I mean, God knows, functional medicine, that systems approach worked really well for me. But then I couldn't keep it up, right? It's like, "Okay, that was like one small piece of this bigger puzzle."

But I think you bring up a really great point, Mags, about just us not knowing how to check in on people. And what are the signs? And then, yeah, if we can't be with our own discomfort, then we just want to fix it for other people, right? Which is like, "Well, at least it's not this." Bow because we can't be with our own discomfort. There's like so much complexity there.

[01:35:08] MLV: It's unintentionally dismissive. And we just cover it up with buzzwords. But we don't mean to. But it's just – yeah, I think it's just, as a whole, like, we don't have the skills yet and don't know what it looks like to really support someone and get to the right answers of like how a person – what they're really struggling with?

[01:35:26] AS: Yeah. And if we can be – I mean, I love that you said I think if we can have these kind of conversations we're having now, right? Where it's just like, "Oh, shit. I've done that in the past. I've told people just to think positive." Or this comes is what comes up for me, right? Then we could get there, but we have to have the capacity to even like be real with each other, I guess, to have these kind of conversations that, I don't know, maybe they're happening more and more. I'm not sure.

But mags. What about you? But thank you both for that. I think we just had a really important discussion in this value of authenticity. Authenticity is changing, right? It's a dynamic nature of what's real for us. But I think it's one that kind of how you were saying, Charlotte, to like, "Oh, everyone says this is the stigmatizer. Let's celebrate authenticity." But then often, when you come with it, it's often people we don't know how to handle it effectively.

[01:36:18] CH: Yeah. Yeah, Mags, what about you? Oh, Charlotte, did you have anything more to say before we go to Mags?

[01:36:24] CH: No. Just that I think she's awesome. The thing is that we don't know how to check in. I think that was one of the biggest thing in this podcast that I just going to keep with my heart.

[01:36:38] MLV: It's an important part of the conversation because it's not just on the person. It's like how do we do that? How do we even do that? And what does that look like? Yeah, that's definitely one – One of the values that I always held was authenticity. But it's getting there with in this kind of society and how we say the waters that we're swimming in. It's like it's hard to show up authentically when you have everything else going on.

But for me, just so much pressure was removed in my story and these harsh self-judgments that were affecting my mental health for a long time when I finally understood that self-sabotage is self-protection. And so, just so much. It almost feels like it evaporated this heaviness and this – I feel like I've healed a lot.

And so, now the things that I value are almost like things that are unseen to the eye, like nuance that we always talk about, discernment. And a huge one is the self-advocacy that could actually save your life because you are asking questions. If something doesn't feel right, let's say, with a specialist or a doctor. It's like, "No. Don't just take that as your answer." It's like you

have the right to change doctors. You have the right to ask for more if something doesn't feel right. And that could save your life.

So, it's all these things, this insight, that helped where I value so much more. And it's stuff that you can't necessarily see. And I think that's what we skip over when it comes to a lot of things in society, is like, "Oh, we value results. We value what we can see. What's tangible?" But what about all this other stuff that's almost like spiritual. It's almost – we're just dismissing all of that for these things that are on the surface. And it doesn't mean any one of them is necessarily bad. But look in all the value of all the – everything that I've gained when it comes to values is like the self-trust is there. The confidence is there. It's just such a day and night kind of thing when you actually start to have those insights and understand like, "Okay."

I don't know. Just for me, like the whole program is almost permission to be yourself. And then that leads to safety. And that leads to self-trust. And that leads to just – Just like we say embodying beauty. It's like embodying safety. Because now I can put myself in situations that I couldn't a year ago. So, yeah.

[01:39:00] AS: And what about – like I think one tangible thing is you talked about perfectionism. And you have a business that you're building on the side of your job. And it really fulfills you. And can you talk about how before it was kind of like all or nothing? And now you're realizing how much, again, that progress and success is being redefined differently. And you're finding so much fulfillment. And like the sustainability of that to you keep showing up by working on it a little bit at a time versus – Because boredom eating, like eating at work at a boredom, was a big thing for you.

And part of that, we got to that story, around feeling like you need to have more purpose and stuff like that. Can you talk about how that working on it a little bit at a time and like letting go of perfectionism and really tuning into that embodied soul and creativity with that has shifted things?

[01:39:50] MLV: Yeah, it's something that happens sort of gradually. I was just like, "Okay .You know what? Let me just –" Even if it's 10 minutes. I just started building a bit of consistency and then started realizing, "Wow!" At the end – those 10 minutes or 15 minutes a day add up. And then you're somewhere completely different in like a month. Whereas before I would be like, "Oh, I'm going to devote my whole weekend to this. And my whole day is going to go towards this." It was like these grandiose efforts where it's like, "Yes! I'm going to relaunch. I'm going to do a professional photo shoot." Go big or go home. It was like it's these romantic ideas of what it's supposed to look like.

Whereas when I just, "Okay, let me just upload a product. Or let me just post something small." And then I was like, "You know what? I started appreciating that kind of space that I'm giving myself." And, yeah, I just kind of started to honor my process more. It just feels more authentic even like that because I'm not doing it – nothing else is telling me like, "Oh, no, I need to be a certain place." If you really want to be a business, you have to do this. You have to – It's kind of like I'm going at a pace that I feel comfortable with. And I just feel like it makes all the difference to even show up a little bit. And then by bit you start feeling like, "Oh, okay, that's not so bad."

It just like it starts to change when you just – it's slow and subtle and you don't realize while it's happening. At least I didn't. But when I look at the differences, like, before I wouldn't even commit to even like an hour unless I can do like, let's say, two, three hours. It's just – A night, I mean, like working on that. I just feel like it's there was no appreciation before for that slow and subtle change because it was all, like, I want those radical result because that's what counts. Now it's because I can value everything else so much more, I just feel like, "Oh, I can actually say that I'm enjoying it even though it comes –" Just like any other business, it comes with stuff you don't want to do. But at the end of the day it just feels more nourishing because, yeah, it's kind of like, "Okay, it's a small mini victory." But at the end of the day, those little things, they do add up. And before the way I used to see baby steps and stuff, I used to feel like it was demoralizing for some reason. I was like I was so set on, "One day, I'm going to drop

everything and da-da-da-da-da." It was just I had such a different outlook. And now, I'm valuing my process more and honoring the steps that feel right for me.

[01:42:19] AS: Well, I love that, because perfectionism falls under the like fantasy category of what we do. Because it takes us out of the action and it doesn't make us – we avoid the discomfort of pursuing meaningful things, right? And I just love that example because you're taking the risk to show up. And so, many times we think weight loss is going to give us the resilience that we need to pursue our goals. And instead, you're in reality. You're learning how a business really works without taking away your livelihood because you need your job.

And so, it's like this – and again, you're doing it on your own terms. So, when it comes to the stuff that you don't want to do, you're being fulfilled by other parts of the process, which creates the sustainability. And I just love that what you said is so important for people who have that avoid protection strategy, is like, "Oh, my God, I feel different."

We think, as humans, how we're feeling now is how it's always going to be. But when we're trying to start something, it's like you don't know how you're going to feel in three months. Just show up, right? Make that the value of like showing up and being real authentic outside of just how you're showing up. But like authentic with how business and life actually works. And a realness.

And, look, you're like, "Oh, my God, I'm discovering all this stuff. And I'm at a different place."

[01:43:39] MLV: Yeah, just trying. Honestly, just trying is something. And before I would be like, "No. Unless I'm doing something remarkable here, it doesn't count." But, no. Those things that end up being remarkable, it's from all those little things that you did along the way. Yeah, it looks a lot different how, I guess, take on my side hustle and life in general. I'm happy about that, for sure.

[01:44:04] AS: Well, and I love that. Because that's changing your story of I need to be perfect or hide. Versus I can show up in process. And, wow! It's actually pretty satisfying.

[01:44:14] MLV: Yeah, and learning – you learn. And then it's kind of nice to learn as you go, too. Because if it was all figured out overnight, like, I don't know. I'm just getting so much more now that I have better tools and different values. It feels good.

[01:44:30] AS: You guys both have just like really evolved and owned your story and changing it. And it's so inspiring. And is there anything thing that I haven't asked you before we wrap up that you want to share about your values and how that's evolved and changed and changed your story?

[01:44:48] CH: I don't know really changed the story. Yes, it has probably because of the binary, like, "If I'm always wrong, I've been striving to be right. I'm going to be right. I got to be right." The opposite there. We haven't touched on that, but you mentioned that to me when we've been talking through the course. And I'm like, "That's right. You're striving to be right then." Because I'm afraid going for the other one, the black and white and good.

And then the other day I just had this, not epiphany, but how that how it transitions. I mean, midlife and transition. Because I'm tired of the perimenopause and menopause wording. Because then you don't even know the hell where you are. I like the transitioning. And that I can't remember the woman that started using it.

But anyway. That is also – that's usually – Or quite often, when women is like, "Oh, you're getting on the other side." Again, like I don't care what other people think. It's about me. Estrogen is low. Kids are out of the deal. And that's when I felt like, "You know what? I'm really out of that like not that I really had it." And I think it can be very needed with some little fight in us. A lot of us need that, that are quite often froze or avoid.

But I really went out of that like I don't care what the people think about me. Fuck them attitude. To more like, "I don't care what other people choose or do." Because that's just a distraction. What I've used is the distraction. Like, instead of staying with me, then it's maybe not the deal with where I am and live my life.

Now, both. And I just love it. I stay in my lane and I care about people. And I care because – and I care about what they think about me. Because if it's people I value, I care what they think about me. Because it could be something that could be supportive of me. Or, "Hey, Charlotta." When we talked about how do you check in on people? I'd like people – if they have concerns to people that I think is worthy of – I would like them to ask like what are you doing here? Taking [inaudible 01:46:48] the same for me. That shift feels like I don't care what they choose. I care about them. I care that they're okay. But I don't care about their choice and how they're living life, which is also meaning that somewhere down my line I'm judging myself less for what I do and what I think. And that's is huge to me.

[01:47:10] AS: Yeah. And what you're describing is a value of relational intelligence, right? Or like how someone relating versus what are they specifically doing? And you're valuing – again, that's part of the feminine, is openness, right? History of all that stuff. So, I love that. I love that, Charlotta.

[01:47:32] CH: And I also want to say – One more thing. That this deal, just doing it this year, the course with you for a year. And by no means healed or cure. This is a beginning and it's a process that you say, like, it's about the two-year process, and dang right. But this first year has been a foundation. And now it's like this is kind of cool. This is exciting. Where can I practice more? Because it doesn't mean that my story is dead or gone by no means.

[01:48:00] AS: Oh, no, no, no. Yeah.

[01:48:02] CH: No. No. And the thing about not meeting my basic needs here this afternoon, I was busy not, "Oh!" Waiting for the call and doing this. I was going to skip eating today so like, "Hello! Here we go. Here's my story. Basic needs." I love that today how I caught myself many times with a body. It's no need. Instead of also sitting here freaking about it, I went for a walk. Got some – The few hours of daylight we have here now in Sweden, I got some fresh air. A went and made a meal. I ate properly. And things like that. So, my story is always around it. I love that. But now I'm more excited about it. It's like, "Oh, shoot! I caught myself." And I can mother myself. I love that.

[01:48:46] AS: Well, yeah. And this is about – and I talked about this with Stacy last episode. I mean, ultimately we realized our story isn't as true as we think it is, right? And what we're really working on is how do we relate to ourselves, right? How do we relate to our story differently? And that takes a while. And you can think about how much shift has happened just in these beginning places and how much just more and rebellious. You said you value rebellion. Like it's just a path to rebellion at a normal –

[01:49:14] CH: Yeah. I don't rebel just to rebel. I rebel because it's where more control.
[inaudible 01:49:21]. Exactly. Yeah.

[01:49:24] AS: Mags, anything else you want to say?

[01:49:26] MLV: Yeah. Well, just to add to that. For sure, it's an ongoing process. I think the difference is, for me, like I just feel good. And so, I wanted to do a public service announcement out there just to be like, "For me, it's meant everything to me." Anyways, it's just I feel so empowered and I just feel like I think a lot of people will not question spending money on themselves, let's say, like to go on a trip or to like medicate themselves in very like superficial ways. But then maybe not take the time to actually dig a little deeper. I just wanted to say that your support has meant everything to me, and even the community and Charlotta, everyone. And I just feel that you're worth it. And I can't believe where I am now compared to last year.

Even though, yes, it is ongoing, you can be in a dramatically different place in a year like. When your feelings of safety changes in this world, it just changes everything. I just want to thank you, Ali, and just really say to people who are wondering if this is something that they should do, I just feel like we're just used to dismissing a lot and not valuing it as much as like an all-inclusive trip or stuff like that. But it's your mental health and your well-being that is going to be with you for the rest of your life. I just want to say that your podcast, and your work and your programs just for me have meant everything to me.

[01:51:03] AS: Oh, Mags, I'm over here like tearing up, too. It's just unbelievable to me. And like, it's just – I hope that you know how much your community and all of us, we value. And how much your work is just doing so much for so many women and just empowering them.

[01:51:23] AS: Oh, thank you. I'm like over here crying. I appreciate it. Thank you. And I love your example of an all-inclusive trip. Because I'm like, "This is an all-inclusive trip." But a different kind of trip. Mind, body, soul.

[01:51:41] MLV: Yeah, yeah.

[01:51:43] AS: But I love that example. So, it is. It is.

[01:51:46] CH: And the all-inclusive with all the food and drink you can eat.

[01:51:50] MLV: Yeah, that sounds like my kind of trip. Yeah.

[01:51:54] CH: And we didn't haven't even touched the food, because I had my suspicions. Like, "Oh, my God, she's going to tell us what to eat or what to do." And like you have not told me a damn thing what to do in food or nothing. Absolutely, nothing. You've just been asking and I've been answering myself. Well, I've been finding the way. That was a huge relief. Like, she's not telling me to eat greens, or beef, or whatever. That's all up to me.

[01:52:21] MLV: It feels different at first where you're like, "[inaudible 01:52:24] telling me what to eat." What? But, yeah, it's because you finally realize that the answers are in you and you're going to figure that out. You just have that support to get you there and kind of like be there as a safety net as you go.

[01:52:40] CH: You don't want to be told what to eat. But then when you didn't tell us what to eat, it's like, "Whoa! Whoa! What's going on here?"

[01:52:47] MLV: Yeah, exactly.

[01:52:49] CH: What is this?

[01:52:51] AS: There are definitely experiments to guide. And at the end of the day, though, it's like food is actually a really simple piece of this.

[01:52:57] CH: Yeah. And you're so knowledgeable about food and what works. You have all that knowledge. So, you're there. You have it and everything. But that's not your leading deal. And that's what this isn't – this isn't what it's about. But I love that how I'm just like, "I don't want her to tell me what to do or what to eat." And then when you did, it's like, "Okay. I'm on my own." No. No. Not on my own. But I'm like, "Whoa! This is cool."

[01:53:23] MLV: It takes getting used to. That's all. Because we're so used to like being told what to eat and when. Yeah.

[01:53:29] CH: What's wrong and right? And keto. Eat vegan.

[01:53:34] AS: Yeah. That's all you have to do, is eat keto and not sugar. Eat sugar –

[01:53:39] MLV: That's it.

[01:53:41] AS: Oh. Well, thank you both so much. Oh, mags, also, I would not be a supportive entrepreneur if I didn't have you plug your business. I meant to have you do that before. And then I totally forget. I'll include it in the show notes. But tell people a little bit about your business.

[01:53:57] MLV: Yes. So, it's right up this alley of it's kind of like fusing my poetry and art with emotions and all of that. I make handcrafted frames. And it's called thesparklymud.com is the website. Yeah, I basically write poetry. And it's a lot about feelings. And the whole thing of it is because our society dismisses a lot. It's just like a – the idea is like a safe space to actually honor those feelings, whatever they are.

Yeah, it's basically handcrafted frames and poetry that I write that, yeah, it can be a gift, it can be a gift for yourself, it could be, yeah, home decor. It's all of that. Yeah, thesparklingwood.com. And, yeah, you'll see one product a month at it because I'm going at my own pace. Yeah.

[01:54:43] AS: But you do take custom order. So –

[01:54:47] MLV: I do. Yeah, that's right. Yeah, it's really in the early stages. And I'm just enjoying it for now. And I feel like it's kind of showing that – I don't know. It just feels different. Kind of like what you're saying with time and stuff like that slowing it down. Because you're showing up where you've nourished yourself, it just looks different as well. I'm just feeling better about it where I'm not competing with anything or anyone. And just kind of going at my own pace. But, yeah, it's up there. It's out there.

[01:55:17] AS: I love it. So, thesparklingmud.com. And also, you're on Instagram as well?

[01:55:22] MLV: Yes, @thesparklingmud. Yeah.

[01:55:25] AS: Wonderful. Thank you both for your time and for your courage. We joked it feels like ass, but it also feels pretty damn good, right? When you're basking in the results.

[01:55:36] MLV: That's exactly how it feels right now, yeah.

[01:55:38] AS: Good. Thank you both.

[01:55:40] CH: Thank you.

[OUTRO]

[01:55:43] AS: Thank you, health rebels and visionary storytellers for tuning in today. If you know someone who would benefit from this episode, please share it with them. And remember, we have transcripts of our episodes at [Alishapiro.com/podcast](https://alishapiro.com/podcast) for your non-audio friends and family. And if you can, I'd love it if you can leave a review on Apple Podcasts. It helps more people find the show. And both actions, reviewing and sharing with others, helps us change the cultural narrative around food, weight and our bodies.

Thanks for engaging in a different kind of conversation. And remember, always, your body truths are unique, discoverable, profound, and liberating.

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